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**World War-I Assignment**

**Part-A**

1. In “Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen, why is “Dulce et Decorum Est pro patria mori” the “old lie”?

Answer:

According to Owen, it is an old lie because it misleads the people and promotes jingoism for no rational reason. “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”* is quoted from a Roman poem of Horace (65 BC - 8 BC), and the meaning of this quotation is that to die for one’s country is a sweet and an honorable thing. Horace is an ancient poem and he observed many wars and political transformations in Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar. He romanticized war while he was in expeditions with Augustus. This quotation had been being glamorized in whole Europe until Owen called it an old lie during WW-I. The *modern* poets were the first poets who rebelled against the tradition of glamourizing war rather they called it empty jingoism to slaughter human beings. Owen portrays the state of young soldiers who are screaming in suffocation and then he says that you dare not tell your children this old lie or they would meet the same fate.

1. Do courage, loyalty, duty, or patriotism play any role in the universe conjured up by Owen’s poem? Why or why not?

Answer:

Courage, loyalty, duty, and patriotism are the words unknown to the world conjured up by Owen in the poem “Dulce et Decorum Est”. The poem is in the form of dramatic monologue where a soldier of WW-I is telling the miserable circumstances of his crew. Traditionally, the soldiers used to romanticize their war experiences where they used to tell their level of commitment to their country, but the narrator of this poem has nothing to do with these words rather he is sharing how pathetic and miserable was their condition. Everyone was running to save his life on the ground while some others were drowning helpless. Owen says: “Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,” shows that Owen’s soldiers have nothing to do with bravery, patriotism, or courage *(Poetry Foundation*. N.p, 2019). They are just in war without knowing the reason for their fight. This was the state of almost all the European soldiers in the great wars.

1. Why does Rupert Brooke welcome war and what virtues does he find in death on the battlefield?

Answer:

Rupert Brooke is considered the poet of WW-I but he does not follow the tradition of the modern poets rather he follows the classical status quo while talking about war. He welcomes war and claims that it is honorable to die on the battlefield because it is the war that gives us our beautiful home England to live and enjoy. Brooke believes that his beautiful and prosperous England emerged after noble war and it survived staying integrated due to wars. He says that when a soldier dies on the battlefield, he thinks of the beauties of England that were the blessings of war. He says that when soldiers die they feel: “…hearts at peace, under an English heaven”.

1. How do Owen’s and Brooke’s attitude towards patriotism differ?

Answer:

Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke both are British poet soldiers of the *modern* age, but they both have the opposite attitude towards patriotism. It could be the result of their personal experiences but one demonizes the war while the other glamourize it. Brooke claims that dying in the battlefield fills the heart of the soldier with peace and satisfaction when he thinks about the beauty of England that was the result of wars and battles. Brooke's attitude towards patriotism is different from almost all the contemporary poets. He believes that one should fight bravely and die honorably for the country.

Owen disagrees with Brooke like all his contemporary poets. He considers that all the fuss of war is without any rational purpose and it has caused a traumatic situation for soldiers. He demonizes war by using war imagery to create a feeling of pity and fear in his reader.

**Part-B**

All Quiet on the Western Front

This excerpt has been chosen from a novel by Erich Maria Remarque that reveals the miserable state of German soldiers who fought during WW-I. Kat is a narrator in this part of the novel who tells facts about the trauma that the soldiers went through during the war. The narrator narrates that army drilling transform a civil person dramatically after he is trained like we train our dogs. The soldiers appear pitiable while fighting in trenches and they have no noble objective in their view when they fight there. The Western Civilization has no worth in the eyes of the soldiers and they believe that Bushmen are more civilized than them.

Remarque describes Himmelstoss as a cruel drilling sergeant who was a post-man before becoming a soldier. He says that Himmelstoss was not such a cruel man but the army drilling and uniform have transformed him. He explains it by giving an example: "if you train a dog to eat potatoes and then afterward put a piece of meat in front of him, he'll snap at it" (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). He says that if you give a man authority, he would behave like a dog. Drilling after drilling is a popular practice in the army and the officers are given full authority over the young soldiers that enable them to exploit those soldiers.

Soldiers who fight in trenches are portrayed in a pathetic state. They are tired, injured, untidy, and away from their homes and civil life. They are always at the threat of death, they do not know when they will be ordered to run and where to. They are unaware of their future and they do not know do they fight. When shells are thrown on them from the enemy side, they get disappear in a haze of those shells. Firing starts and when it stops, the soldiers find them among countless dead bodies. They are so helpless that they have no other place to keep the bodies so they rest lying among the rotten bodies of their deceased friends.

The soldiers have no idea about any noble objective of the war rather they know that it is wrong practice. They only know that they are fighting but they do not know the reason. They are in trauma and they do not believe that they are alive. The author quotes a soldier in these words: “A hospital alone shows what war is” (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). It shows that the only thing that is known to the soldiers is the fear of death, and all other subjects are irrelevant for them: “All other expressions lie in a winter sleep, life is simply one continual watch against the menace of death;--it has transformed us into unthinking animals in order to give us the weapon of instinct” (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). Moreover, the narrator says that: “I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another” (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). It reveals that the soldiers do not have any noble views about the war.

The soldiers who fought in trenches renounce the great advances of Western Civilization, and they believe that the so-called civilized Western community is poorer than Bushmen. The narrator renounces the civilization in these words: "It must be all lies and of no account when the culture of a thousand years could not prevent this stream of blood being poured out” (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). The soldiers are much pessimistic and they do not want to talk about anything like culture because they think the only thing they have in their life that they will save until they die at the hands of their so-called enemies. The narrator says that: "The Bushmen are primitive and naturally so, but we are primitive in an artificial sense" (Remarque, Erich Maria, 2004). It means that the aboriginals and the native Americans are primitive as their culture could not progress, but have become primitive like our millennia-old forefathers by killing our culture. Remarque writes the emotions of a soldier who believes that the Bushmen have the chance to enrich their culture through spiritual practices, but we do not have any such opportunity as we have lost our spirituality too.

All the noted arguments show the miserable and pessimistic state of the German soldiers who were forced into the battlefield during WW-I.

**Works Cited**

#### "The Poetry Of World War I By The Editors." *Poetry Foundation*. N. p., 2019. Web. 17 Nov. 2019.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All quiet on the western front*. Vol. 68. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2004.